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Falls Church Chamber of Commerce

# Public Policy Positions

Adopted by the Board of Directors

January 8, 2019

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# About the Chamber



The Falls Church Chamber of Commerce is an independent, 501(c)6 non-profit membership organization founded in 1947. The Chamber is governed by a Board of Directors pursuant to the Chamber's Bylaws. The Board meets the second Tuesday of each month.

The Chamber's mission is to promote local business interests in order to foster economic prosperity and civic well-being in the greater Falls Church community. It advances its mission by supporting business and community growth and development, providing members with educational, marketing, and networking opportunities, advocating Chamber positions on critical business issues, and encouraging quality business ethics and community respect.

Whether by engaging with the local business community, providing better customer service by local government, or connecting business owners to capital, the Chamber helps provide a foundation for a stronger local economy.

As part of its advocacy on behalf of local businesses, the Chamber's Legislative Committee monitors and advises the Chamber on legislative and regulatory issues on the local, state, and federal levels, and promotes the interests of its members.

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# Introduction

The Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce (the “Chamber”) represents the interests of approximately 300 businesses in the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, and Arlington County (referred to herein as “greater Falls Church”). The Chamber’s mission is to promote local business interests in order to foster economic prosperity and civic well-being in the greater Falls Church community.

Greater Falls Church has garnered local and national recognition as a premiere location for quality of life, education, and commercial enterprises. The contributions of a strong and vibrant business community are essential to providing the resources necessary to sustain high levels of service and public infrastructure.

At the same time, the local economy faces challenges with federal government contractions and increasing competition within the region for business attraction and retention. A vibrant business community is imperative for the continued success of the local economy, as well as for the fiscal health and sustainability of the greater Falls Church community; all efforts must be made to ensure a positive and welcoming business climate.

The Chamber believes that its governmental policy environment should foster—rather than stifle or discourage—private-sector investment and growth. The Chamber also believes that the business community should be a stakeholder in any discussion and development of proposed, new or amended law, policy, regulation, or other type of local, state, or federal government-imposed rule that would impact the cost, operations, or growth of business in greater Falls Church.

To that end, this document reflects the Chamber’s public policy perspective and is meant to inform its members and public officials; stimulate civic thought and debate; and aid in the development of sound public policy. The policies contained herein are intended to provide a unified voice on issues that are most important to Chamber members. The policies were developed and approved by the Chamber’s Legislative Committee and were recommended to the Board of Directors. Both bodies, upon additional discussion, approved the policies.

Development of public policy is an ongoing process, and the Chamber welcomes and encourages well-informed discussions on the issues facing business. The Chamber encourages the expression of various opinions from its membership, as well as active participation with its Legislative Committee. This document is to be updated, as needed, pursuant to Chamber Board of Directors’ action. It does not represent the individual views of any Chamber member business or civic organization, Chamber employees, affiliated organizations, or partners.

# Economic Development

The Chamber supports continued focus on maintaining and improving the region's quality of life and overall economic climate through strategic economic development efforts. The Chamber supports efforts by local governments to prioritize economic development and make greater Falls Church highly competitive in the regional marketplace. The Chamber supports increased investment in the expansion of the commercial revenue base through local government marketing and business attraction efforts, which lessen the burden on residential taxpayers. The Chamber also supports a focus on competitive incentives to both attract and retain businesses. Specific economic development policies include:

- [Business-Friendly Regulations](#): The Chamber urges elected officials to be mindful that excessive and inconsistent restrictions placed on business development or expansion that do not contribute materially to improving quality and effectiveness of business relations sends a negative signal to prospective and existing businesses that are considering or may consider greater Falls Church as a place to locate and/or expand. The Chamber opposes existing and proposed regulations that have or will have a demonstrably adverse impact on net business and job growth.
- [Small Businesses](#): Small and local businesses are an essential component of greater Falls Church's economy and the Chamber's membership. They not only create well-paying jobs, but they deliver vital services, generate sales tax revenue, and contribute to the unique character and livability of Falls Church's neighborhoods. Small and local businesses are also particularly active in community service and volunteerism, and they provide goods that are not generally available from larger competitors. For these reasons and, as noted in the Chamber's *2017 Resource Guide For Small Businesses*, efforts to support and retain greater Falls Church's unique local businesses are a Chamber priority. The Chamber strongly supports increased governmental funding to support small business infrastructure and the continued development of existing programs and initiatives that support small businesses.
- [Economic Development Authority Funding](#): The Chamber supports efforts to fully leverage the capabilities and strategic value that local economic and industrial development authorities offer greater Falls Church. This includes each organization's role in: community education programs; conducting research, purchasing, leasing, and selling property; tax exempt financing; and supporting projects and programs that promote business and investment in greater Falls Church.
- [State Economic Incentives](#): The Chamber encourages the General Assembly to continue to invest in business incentive programs and infrastructure improvements that recognize the unique needs and challenges faced in

Northern Virginia, thus encouraging dynamic and growing businesses to invest in greater Falls Church. The Chamber supports the strategic use of economic incentives by state and local government—including tax incentives, disbursement of funds from the Commonwealth Opportunity Fund, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership’s programs—to attract and retain commercial investment. The Chamber supports continued and increased funding for these programs but recommends that the full economic impact of a business’ and/or industry’s presence in greater Falls Church be evaluated prior to creating or removing any business tax exemption. To foster an environment in which greater Falls Church can attract and retain top-quality companies, priority should be given to reviewing the qualification criteria for Virginia’s business incentive programs to ensure that greater Falls Church can qualify for, and benefit from, these programs.

## Land Use & Zoning

The Chamber believes that properly managed growth and development is good for greater Falls Church and its business community. Local governments must continuously stimulate business growth as a means to maintain its economic and fiscal viability, especially amidst the ever-escalating competition among business centers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The Chamber believes that land use policy and regulations should be flexible so as to attract the investment of commercial and residential developers. Such policies and regulations should incorporate incentives and avoid any undue or unnecessary restrictions, allowing the community process to foster innovative designs and solutions.

The Chamber strongly recommends that businesses in greater Falls Church not be overburdened with excessive or unnecessary land use or zoning regulations. The Chamber supports land use and zoning regulations that: (1) provide maximum flexibility to allow landowners and other businesses to adapt to changing market and economic conditions; (2) take into account market trends and demands; and (3) support the highest and best business growth, utilizing best practices to drive such growth. Specific policies include:

- [Efficient Permitting Processes](#): A necessary component to the attraction of commercial investment is streamlining and maximizing the efficiency of planning and permitting processes. The Chamber supports an ongoing examination of local government regulatory processes to minimize the regulatory and administrative burden placed upon businesses seeking to invest in greater Falls Church. The Chamber believes priority should be given to improving the processes for approving development plans, building permit applications, and handling other related administrative approvals that have an impact on businesses. Existing codes and procedural requirements that

do not contribute to meaningful improvement of a particular proposal under consideration must be streamlined or eliminated, and fees assessed should be consistent with the actual cost to local government to facilitate the process.

- Mixed-Use Redevelopment: The Chamber encourages the evolution, repurposing, and greater utilization of existing, underdeveloped commercial and industrial properties into mixed-use development projects that improve walkability, incorporate safe pedestrian and bicycle options, accommodate emerging transportation technologies (e.g., electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, scooters, etc.), and increase the area's commercial tax base. The Chamber believes such development will be the primary source of new class A retail and office space within greater Falls Church. The Chamber encourages planning policies that will allow construction of housing types that are sufficient to meet the demand created by expected job creation, which will keep housing prices within reach for more working families. The Chamber believes new mixed-use redevelopment should adhere to the following standards:
  - Projects should add significant value to commercial real estate assessments, thus spreading the cost of public services over a larger group of property owners;
  - Projects should generate additional employees and residents (in mixed-use developments) who will add substantially to the customer base for existing, new, and future businesses;
  - Projects should serve as an anchor or as an attraction, drawing people to greater Falls Church, thus increasing spin-off economic benefits for the business community;
  - Projects should provide for significant amenities and aesthetic considerations, including public art, thus serving as an inducement to promote increased business activities;
  - Projects should provide "right-sized" parking;
  - The design and orientation of projects should provide for attractive pedestrian access and circulation while mitigating any congestion or safety concerns generated by increased motor vehicle traffic;
  - Projects should not place undue burden on existing municipal services such that it would have an adverse impact on existing businesses and future growth; and
  - The design, massing of building elements, scale, use of materials, colors and textures, height and density, and overall architectural character of a project should contribute to the image of greater Falls Church as a

prosperous commercial business center that will appeal to a growing number of office and retail enterprises, customers, clients, and visitors.

- [Fiscal Impact Modeling](#): The Chamber supports fiscal impact modeling to measure the impact of proposed development projects on local governments' annual operating budgets. The Chamber supports the periodic updating of such modeling systems to ensure that they reflect market trends and assessed values.
- [Comprehensive Planning](#): The Chamber strongly recommends that local comprehensive plans reflect a shared inter-jurisdictional vision for future growth and economic prosperity. To ensure that outcome, the Chamber supports a strong and effective business stakeholder input and review process for the continued improvement of each locality's comprehensive plan and small area plans, in part to ensure that land use policies and land use designations reflect the current and future needs of businesses.
- [Incentive-Based Zoning](#): The Chamber also supports an incentive-based approach, as opposed to mandates, to encourage the type of development that is desired in greater Falls Church, including programs that incent green or sustainable development, affordable housing, and other laudable development goals without adding additional time and expense to the development process.

## Housing

A sustainable greater Fall Church requires a range of housing options that are affordable to a broad spectrum of citizens. Moreover, the strength and viability of the local economy relies on the availability of a mix of housing options as it directly impacts workforce recruitment and retention. Diversity in housing types also serves as a key factor in business location decisions.

To that end, the Chamber supports the availability of a wide range of housing types to meet the needs of greater Falls Church's population and workforce. The Chamber believes that residential growth adds vitality to the area's economy, as the dollars spent on architecture, engineering, and construction can be an important source of income and employment for many residents. Additionally, new residents drive demand for retail and office which has a very positive fiscal impact on the community. Additionally, the approval of higher density housing in appropriate locations provides greater housing choices for all greater Falls Church's citizens. Specific policies include the following:

- [Housing Plan](#): The Chamber encourages planning for a wide range of housing choices to support future economic development and job growth. The Chamber supports the development of comprehensive and effective

housing plans that address the need for market rate, workforce, and affordable housing, and that include establishing goals for workforce housing based on a credible demographic study of needs.

- [Housing Affordability](#): The Chamber supports affordable housing programs as a way to support greater Falls Church's workforce, drive economic development, and draw a link between affordable housing and business. The Chamber believes the best way to ensure that a sufficient number of housing units are affordable to a broad percentage of the greater Falls Church community is to provide developers and property owners with incentives including, but not limited to, increased density, real estate tax credits, application fee waivers, and tax abatements, in return for the creation or preservation of housing units that are affordable across a broad portion of the local population. The Chamber also supports initiatives to partner with affordable housing developers to build parking or other improvements that would bring down the per-unit cost of affordable housing. The Chamber encourages community-wide discussion regarding alternative housing forms, such as duplexes, basement apartments, and accessory dwelling units.
- [Review of Affordable Housing Regulations](#): The Chamber supports thorough and continuous reviews of regulations that affect affordable housing to ensure they achieve the stated goal of delivering an adequate inventory of affordable housing to existing and future greater Falls Church residents.
- [Affordability Programs](#): The Chamber supports the use of property tax credits, down payment programs, low interest loans, expedited approval processes, and other programs to increase home ownership for low- to moderate-income households;
- [Age-Restricted Housing](#): Housing for individuals over 55 years generates tax benefits without placing a burden on local school systems. Such housing also helps retain existing residents 55 and older who might otherwise leave greater Falls Church for senior housing options elsewhere. The Chamber supports the broadening of greater Falls Church's age-restricted housing options and believes such residents will spend money at local commercial establishments. This, in turn, will support additional retail and non-residential space such as office and medical uses, as well as supply additional tax revenues to local governments.

## Education

The Chamber believes that top performing public and private Pre-K through 12 education systems that equip students with skills, training, and knowledge are vital to the future economic prosperity and quality of life in greater Falls Church. The

Chamber supports quality education, from the earliest stages of childhood learning and, as appropriate, through higher education. The Chamber recognizes that a strong Pre-K through 12 school system serves as both a base of qualified employees and as a focal point for businesses looking at Falls Church as a potential site location. Education is an important economic development tool.

The private sector must play a critical role in ensuring that schools and workforce development programs are of the highest quality. Businesses support the foundation of a strong educational system, which is needed to allow people to make the most of their jobs and life opportunities. The Chamber embraces the critical leadership role that businesses and industry leaders play in ensuring the quality of instruction, programs, and results from workforce training programs. It is critical that the business and education community be active partners to ensure there is a connection between what students are taught, how they are assessed, and what the workforce needs.

The Chamber supports initiatives and programs to maintain excellence of instruction in local schools to prepare students to either attend college/university or participate in vocational training programs. The Chamber encourages its members to support academic and vocational programs through volunteer activities and financial contributions and to support students through the provision of internships, externships, and job opportunities.

## Employment & Labor Issues

The Chamber supports legislative and regulatory policies that allow businesses to fairly manage their personnel resources without undue intervention. The Chamber supports employers meeting their legal and ethical obligations to their employees and to the government.

- [Equal Opportunity](#): The Chamber is committed to equal employment opportunities in all employment practices—including hiring, training, compensation, benefits, promotion, transfer, termination, and reduction in force—for all individuals without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual preference, or disability. The Chamber encourages employers to take positive steps to ensure that their workforces make full utilization of the human resources available to them.
- [Sourcing Locally & Insourcing](#): The Chamber supports use of both public- and private-sector resources to meet key government needs. When possible, and through an open competitive process, all levels of government should look to the local private sector as providers of products and services,

especially in those areas where the local private sector can demonstrate an ongoing and clear advantage in costs and expertise.

## Environment

The Chamber supports the need for local governments and businesses to work together to protect and maintain the quality of the natural environment. Having land, air, and waterways that are in good condition is supportive of people's health and business productivity; the Chamber therefore supports policies that protect the environment. The Chamber supports a holistic environmental strategy that encourages local businesses and developers to use conscientious and responsible environmental practices for land use, water and air quality, and waste management.

Local policies and statutes for environmental standards should be flexible and respect private property rights and the aspirations of local businesses. The Chamber believes that environmental protection should begin with educational efforts aimed at encouraging environmental stewardship by all citizens and organizations. The Chamber opposes implementing unnecessarily burdensome or costly regulations offering only marginal environmental benefits.

The Chamber encourages local governments to research environmental regulations and policies with a goal of maintaining awareness of best practices and helping to achieve an appropriate level of uniformity across jurisdictions.

The Chamber's support of higher land use density in limited commercial zones is due in part to enhanced environmental impact: Density facilitates walkability and enhances the value of transportation investments that serve as alternatives to reliance on single occupancy vehicles, including Metrorail, bikesharing, and emerging artificial intelligence-based technologies.

The Chamber supports policies that provide incentives for businesses that invest in environmentally sustainable building designs and systems addressing, for example, energy efficiency, renewable energy, stormwater run-off, etc. These include, but are not limited to, tax credits, development densities, faster permitting approvals, and other measures. The Chamber specifically supports:

- Innovative approaches focused on achieving sustainable environmental improvements while maintaining a healthy economic climate;
- Incentive-based programs supporting conservation, efficiency, and other economically viable environmental practices;
- Public-private financing initiatives such as Property Accessed Clean Energy ("PACE") that offer small businesses located in Class B and C buildings

financing for renovations that reduce utility bills, and also offer developers a financing option for new construction;

- Incentivizing, through bonus density increases or other methods, commitments to implement green building practices sufficient to attain certification under established green building rating systems for individual buildings (e.g., the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for New Construction or other equivalent programs with third-party certification);
- Reviewing existing regulations on a regular basis to ensure that they are accomplishing their intended goals in the most effective manner, considering subsequent innovations adopted in other areas to accomplish similar goals, and determining whether changes can be adopted to mitigate any adverse effects of regulations on the business community;
- Phasing in new environmental regulations, where permissible, in instances where such regulations are likely to have a critical effect on businesses, thereby allowing them time to adapt to the new requirements;
- Streamlining administrative development review processes and adopting regular zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan updates that incorporate incentives for environmental sustainability and energy efficiency; and
- Advocating for additional state funding of state-mandated environmental programs in instances where those programs affect local businesses.

## Sound Fiscal Practice & Taxation

Greater Falls Church has maintained high bond/financial ratings, and the Chamber applauds this stewardship in public finance during good and difficult financial times. The Chamber strongly encourages continued commitment by public servants in maintaining, and improving upon, this high standard. The Chamber urges elected government officials to engage the Chamber in every stage of development of any new fiscal policies that impact greater Falls Church's business climate. Doing so will enhance a business-like approach to any policy changes and protect against consequences that might have a negative effect upon the area's economic and business success.

The Chamber believes that a guiding principle of sound governmental fiscal practice is to structure governmental services to available resources. To that end, the Chamber supports a rational balance of the tax burden among businesses,

residents, and users of services. The Chamber further supports sound, fiscally responsible policies that maintain a strong, pro-business environment and opposes tax policies that will have a demonstrably adverse effect on net business and job growth and is not aligned with surrounding jurisdictions. The Chamber supports the creation of a finance system for local and state government that properly aligns revenue sources with expenditure requirements.

The Chamber strongly urges that additional savings and economies of scale be sought and adopted before local government considers any increase in the real estate tax burden. To achieve this objective, the Chamber supports the following:

- [Tax Policy](#): The Chamber supports tax policies that:
  - Carefully consider all available revenue options and then implement the appropriate options, at the appropriate levels, to meet local government's resource needs;
  - Implement a stringent, business-like analysis of local government programs and service levels, to effectively align the investment of limited business and residential taxpayer resources with those government operations that serve the most vital interests of the area;
  - Assess all proposed tax policies against the potential impact on greater Falls Church's economic competitiveness and quality of life—not just on the revenues that are anticipated; and
  - Use unbudgeted and nonrecurring surplus tax revenues to fund nonrecurring capital expenditures in the areas of transportation and education or to supplement the Commonwealth's "Rainy Day Fund," rather than for new or recurring programmatic expenses.
- [Adjacent Jurisdiction Tax Competitiveness](#): To reduce the potential that local tax rates might discourage business expansion within greater Falls Church, the Chamber encourages ongoing monitoring of comparative local tax rates amongst Northern Virginia's jurisdictions to discover specific tax rates and impact fees that put greater Falls Church at a competitive disadvantage in attracting and retaining certain segments of the business community.
- [Assessments](#): The Chamber supports establishing and maintaining a fair, transparent, and balanced process for both determining real estate tax assessments as well as addressing appeals for taxpayers aggrieved by locally assessed real estate valuations. The Chamber supports the use of standard, accepted appraisal practices in accordance with state law in the generation of real estate tax assessments. The Chamber strongly supports increased business representation on Northern Virginia's Boards of Equalization.
- [State Tax Reform](#): The Chamber supports a statewide tax structure that is equitable and broad-based, fosters a favorable business climate,

encourages economic development, and addresses local governmental abilities and resources to meet their obligations. Beyond exemptions already authorized under the Commonwealth's Constitution, the Chamber opposes further expansion of governmental authority to create differential or multi-tiered local property tax classifications or assessment ratios. Effective tax reform should strive for simplicity, clarity, and reduced cost of compliance to individual and business taxpayers. Tax reform, by definition, also must strive for "revenue neutrality"—neither raising nor reducing the level of revenues. Once "revenue neutral reform" is achieved, the Commonwealth can then best determine whether the level of revenues can be adjusted higher or lower and by what equitable mechanisms such adjustments should be made.

- [Federal Government Shutdowns/Budget Sequestration](#): The Chamber opposes government shutdowns and budget sequestration because of the negative impacts on its members, particularly government contractors, commercial business owners, and government employees.
- [Tax Abatement Incentives](#): The Chamber encourages greater Falls Church to study and, where appropriate, take advantage of and promote all local business tax incentive programs permissible under Virginia law, including commercial redevelopment and technology zone abatement programs.
- [Special Tax Districts](#): The Chamber believes special tax districts should be considered on their merit and used for specific purposes in situations in which they do not disadvantage existing businesses.

## Government & Laws

The Chamber strongly supports the rule of law as a condition for thriving business and economic health. Greater Falls Church's citizens, businesses, and organizations are encouraged to participate in all levels of government and in public policy discussions. To effectively meet the needs and concerns of greater Falls Church's businesses and residents, government must operate with a business-minded focus on efficiency, responsiveness, and strategic vision that enables it to adjust to rapidly changing economic and political landscapes.

A stable and transparent government is a critical component of creating an environment that encourages economic development. To this end, the Chamber supports a regulatory regime at the federal, state, and local levels that emphasizes the importance of strong economic growth while ensuring rules are cost-effective and based on valid scientific and technical data. The Chamber believes the following policies will help enable a more stable, consistent, business-friendly, and business-focused environment:

- [Legislation](#): Laws and regulations must support a strong, pro-business environment that ensures economic competitiveness and protects the ability of businesses to create jobs and economic opportunity. The Chamber believes that governmental regulation serves citizens best when the regulation is clearly essential; limited in purpose; reasonable in application and compliance; flexible enough to respond to changing conditions; and subject to regular review, modification, and elimination. Excessive legislation is wasteful both in the public sector and private enterprise, and legislators at both the state and local levels should address this concern by reviewing and simplifying laws and regulations to minimize their effect on private enterprise, and by requiring an economic and fiscal analysis of the impact of the costs and benefits of proposed legislation where appropriate.
- [Chamber Participation](#): The Chamber strongly advocates that the business community have a central role in the discussion and development of any proposed new or amended law, policy, or regulation that would impact the cost, operations, or growth of businesses in greater Falls Church. The Chamber also supports the appointment of business community representatives to relevant boards and commissions to ensure that a business perspective is proactively sought during policy formulation.
- [Legislation Review](#): The Chamber believes that all levels of government should conduct regular periodic cost impact reviews of all regulations and ordinances to assess the continued relevancy and efficacy of these regulations, with a particular emphasis on eliminating those that unnecessarily hinder job and economic growth.
- [Over-Regulation & Unfunded Mandates](#): The Chamber calls on its elected officials to mitigate unnecessary regulations, streamline those slowing the growth of the private sector, and only impose new regulations that achieve a specific need or goal for the community without imposing an undue burden on business. The Chamber opposes the imposition of unfunded mandates or policy positions, particularly those that would require greater Falls Church businesses and other taxpayers to fund the long-term costs of these mandates. To this end, the Chamber supports transparency and the disclosure in the governmental budgeting process of the cost of all unfunded mandates to businesses and taxpayers.
- [Ethics](#): Business benefits from a legal and regulatory framework that requires the highest standards of ethical behavior and accountability for elected and appointed public officials and employees. The Chamber supports continuing statutory ethics reform for all levels of government; banning the use of campaign funds for personal expenses; and banning the use of public funds by any officer, agent, or employee of any government entity for purposes unrelated to the duties of his or her office without lawful authorization.
- [Public-Private Partnerships](#): The Chamber supports efforts to examine the role of government in providing goods and services to determine those which might be provided more efficiently, effectively, and economically by private-

sector and non-profit organizations, particularly in the areas where services beyond the core functions of government are being provided by government. These public-private partnerships are beneficial collaborations that give public agencies access to the expertise and resources in the private sector, and that allow private-sector entities to make contributions of money and manpower to the communities in which they prosper. Where used effectively, such public-private partnerships improve service delivery and cost effectiveness, increase investment in public infrastructure, reduce public sector risk, deliver capital projects faster, improve budget certainty, and make better use of assets.

- [Open Government](#): The Chamber believes that matters of public policy and finance, with appropriate protections for individual, proprietary, and confidential information, should be discussed in forums that encourage wide public participation, with action taken only after such a public process.
- [Procurement](#): The Chamber supports a fair and open procurement system and encourages government at all levels to rely more on the local private sector for the goods and services it needs.
- [Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation](#): The Chamber supports increased inter-jurisdictional cooperation between local governments, as well as with regional government entities including, but not limited to, the Council of Governments, the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.
- [Infrastructure Investment](#): It is a core responsibility of government to provide the public infrastructure essential to sustain a good quality of life and economic vitality. The Chamber calls on officials at the local and state levels to recognize the importance of world-class infrastructure to the growth of Northern Virginia's economy as a whole. The Chamber supports bond and general fund initiatives that finance critically needed capital infrastructure by taking advantage of historically low borrowing costs. The Chamber also supports use of public-private partnerships and other creative initiatives that will increase the availability of resources to invest in critical infrastructure—including schools, transportation, technology, parks and recreational facilities, water, and public safety—in order to meet the needs of greater Falls Church's businesses and residents.

## Transportation

The Chamber supports the development and maintenance of a safe, convenient, cost-effective multimodal transportation network. This includes all modes of transportation including, but not limited to, pedestrian mobility, automobiles, mass transit, bikesharing, taxi services, and ridesharing. The Chamber supports the use of

performance-based statewide and regional transportation plans focused on existing and new corridors of significance to direct revenues to multi-modal transportation solutions that will minimize congestion, increase safety, and support economic development. The Chamber supports the following policies:

- [Funding](#): The Chamber believes a long-term, equitable, sustainable funding source for transportation is critical for the continued economic vitality of greater Falls Church and for an enhanced quality of life for its citizens. The Chamber opposes using revenue from the state Transportation Trust Fund and the Northern Virginia Transportation District Trust Fund for non-transportation purposes.
- [Transit](#): The Chamber supports local transit and local transit infrastructure to serve the major businesses and job centers in the area and the use of advanced technology and integrated communications to improve transit accessibility and help alleviate traffic congestion. Where applicable, the Chamber supports the enhancement of bus services to provide low cost, intra-city public transportation. The Chamber supports enhancements to the regional bus transit system serving the region's most congested corridors.
- [Traffic Calming](#): The Chamber supports improvements to make existing streets safer for pedestrians and families by minimizing the risks of potential increased traffic and concerns of excessive speed.
- [Airports](#): The Chamber recognizes the positive economic impact that both Washington-Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan National Airport have on greater Falls Church and, in that light, the Chamber fully supports continued infrastructure investment at both airports. The Chamber supports efforts at both airports to remain cost-competitive, both regionally and nationally. The Chamber also supports continued efforts by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) and others to ensure the MWAA's transparency and accountability to the citizens of the Commonwealth and Northern Virginia's jurisdictions.
- [Bicycle Infrastructure](#): The Chamber supports expansion of bicycle infrastructure throughout greater Falls Church, including bicycle racks, wayfinding signage, on-road bicycle lanes where appropriate, bikeshare facilities, and more. Bicycle infrastructure offers a wide range of benefits relating to air quality and congestion, public health, transit access, transportation system efficiency, and neighborhood accessibility. Cycling infrastructure will also encourage more local dining and shopping trips.
- [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority](#): The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) manages one of the region's critical transportation systems. The rail and bus system operated and maintained by WMATA provides a necessary transportation option and is a key part of the future economic growth and success of greater Falls Church. The Chamber supports a close working relationship between WMATA and local governments to ensure the proper functioning of the system, as well as

necessary reforms in the areas of governance, funding, and operations, as well as the proper capitalization of the system.

- [Streetscapes](#): The Chamber supports efforts to maintain clean, inviting, and safe streets and sidewalks as a way to attract customers to local businesses, in a manner that does not have a negative impact upon commerce. The Chamber supports making streets more walkable and standardizing the appearance, safety, and usefulness of the sidewalks, bus shelters, and other aspects of pedestrian-friendly passageways. The Chamber supports the undergrounding of utilities along area streets, either through public-sector infrastructure projects or in conjunction with private-sector redevelopment projects.
- [Telework](#): The Chamber supports innovative business solutions that encourage telework and other cutting-edge virtual workplace initiatives, as well as government incentives to encourage greater use of telework and other transportation demand management measures.
- [Parking](#): The Chamber recognizes that parking is essential to local businesses. In a community such as greater Falls Church where parking spaces are at a premium, responsible parking management is a vital component of private property rights. The Chamber supports efforts by local businesses to find creative solutions to parking challenges and, where appropriate, identify ways to share parking to more efficiently utilize parking resources. The Chamber supports installation of uniform wayfinding signage for public parking and efforts by private developers to include public parking areas in their parking management plans. The Chamber supports the rigorous review of parking ratios. The Chamber believes extreme predatory towing is harmful to a positive commercial, retail, and dining experiences and should be limited during non-business hours.

## Tourism

The Chamber recognizes the quality of life and economic benefits that local and regional tourism contributes to greater Falls Church. The Chamber also recognizes that positioning Falls Church as a desired, thriving tourist destination requires marketing, promotion, tourism coordination, and development.

The Chamber supports an integrated, well-funded approach to marketing greater Falls Church and, by extension, Northern Virginia as a visitor destination and supports ongoing tourist outreach and marketing efforts by the local governments. The Chamber believes that Falls Church's destination marketing strategy must place high priority on those activities that generate the most tax revenue while creating economic opportunities for local businesses with the domestic and international leisure visitor, sports and events, and conference/meetings industry.

In addition, the Chamber supports inclusion of high-value business sectors beyond those traditionally associated with tourism in any Falls Church destination marketing strategy. These would include, but not be limited to, educational facilities like universities or training centers that attract large meetings and groups. In addition, the Chamber recommends that Falls Church's strategy target corporate travel decision makers in order to generate more overnight stays from the area's high-value business sectors. The Chamber also supports the development of state partnerships in regional marketing efforts and infrastructure that supports an expanded visitor economy.

- [Tourism Taxation](#): The Chamber supports efforts to ensure that all regulations, taxes, and zoning ordinances are structured to enable tourism to prosper and will help to distinguish greater Falls Church as a preferred destination. The Chamber supports the tourism industry's position that favors the continued use of transit occupancy taxes to promote tourism.
- [Short-Term Online Rental Markets](#): As the lodging industry evolves to include a wide range of entities—from individuals renting out space in their homes, to traditional hotels and bed and breakfasts—the Chamber supports a level playing field for all entities that provide lodging options to visitors, including short-term online rental market companies. The legal and regulatory environment for this sector should provide for equal tax treatment, transparency and data sharing, adherence to local zoning and safety regulations, and compliance with business licensing.

## Diversity Inclusion & Immigration

The Chamber recognizes that understanding the evolving demographic changes in the region is fundamental to the growth and sustainability of its members. This includes immigrants who have played increasingly important roles in the prosperity and growth of Northern Virginia, filling key jobs and contributing to the rich cultural and intellectual experience that characterizes the region. Creating an inclusive environment that engages individuals reflective of the region's full spectrum strengthens member organizations and is key to the success of greater Falls Church as a whole. The Chamber supports diversity inclusion initiatives as follows:

- Creating a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every employer and employee;
- Making concerted efforts to recruit and retain qualified companies, employers, and employees from traditionally underrepresented groups;

- Providing, to the greatest extent possible, universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible physical space that ensures everyone is able to participate and work to his or her full potential; and
- Regularly reviewing the policies so that fairness is maintained and so that the policies can continue to evolve and remain relevant.

## Healthcare

Falls Church has been recognized as the “Healthiest City in America” by *US News & World Report* and is home to some of the nation’s leading primary and specialty-care practices, wellness businesses, medical facilities, emergency and urgent care centers, outpatient services, and destination institutes. The Chamber recognizes the importance of the healthcare industry to greater Falls Church’s economy and supports individuals having access to quality and affordable healthcare. The Chamber supports tax incentives to encourage the location of healthcare facilities and physicians’ offices in greater Falls Church, supports an increase in the pipeline of qualified healthcare professionals, and supports incentivizing top performers.

The Chamber encourages the advancement of ideas that reduce costs, advance quality, and improve health. The Chamber supports raising awareness of the positive effects of workplace wellness and chronic disease prevention programs to improve health and productivity. The Chamber also supports initiatives to improve quality and lower costs, ensure fair regulation of the insurance market, and expand the adoption of healthcare information technology. The Chamber also supports expansion of healthcare infrastructure in the region to meet community needs, including planning for emergency and pandemic preparedness.

The Chamber recognizes the important role of behavioral health and substance abuse treatment services in creating and maintaining a healthy workforce. The Chamber supports innovation and improvements to the mental health delivery system that enables individuals and families to access preventive, community-based, non-emergency services, while also assuring the care, safety, and support of persons experiencing a mental health crisis. The Chamber also supports efforts to greater leverage private-sector providers in addressing behavioral health needs in the community.

## Energy

The Chamber supports a reliable and affordable energy supply that keeps pace with Northern Virginia’s growing population and economy. The Chamber encourages the

development of new energy generation and transmission infrastructure. Renewable energy, as well as increased energy conservation and efficiency, also should be included in the region's energy portfolio. The Chamber supports market-based and sustainable initiatives that can reduce energy use while contributing to the region's environmental goals. Such initiatives include alternative energy; green buildings; and mixed-use, transit-oriented development.

The Chamber supports efforts to conserve and make more efficient use of fuel, as well as efforts that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These include incentives to increase vehicle mileage and the use of alternative fuels, as well as providing more mode choices for commuting and non-commuting trips. As a way to combine environmental and economic interests, the Chamber supports its members taking advantage of C-PACE (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy), an innovative financing program for green energy upgrades that offers long-term financing for projects that lower energy costs and generate positive cash flow.

## Arts & Culture

With a high concentration of artists and home to a state-designated "Arts and Cultural District," greater Falls Church's arts and culture sector plays a key role in building and sustaining economic vibrancy. Falls Church's arts and business sectors contribute to the area's quality of life, drive economic development, stimulate creativity and innovation, and strengthen the ability of businesses to recruit and retain a diverse group of individuals.

Investing in the arts means investing in an industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue, and is a cornerstone of tourism. The Chamber is committed to advancing support for arts and culture and believes that arts and cultural activities are important elements in business attraction and retention. The Chamber supports coordinated efforts by local and regional arts organizations to expand and enhance cultural assets across greater Falls Church.



[www.fallschurchchamber.org](http://www.fallschurchchamber.org)